

# Healthy Relationships for Youth

*Youth Facilitator and Grade 9 PDR Research Findings, 2006/2007 School Year*

Final Report

July 2007

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## School-Based Violence Prevention Programs

Historically, the primary function of schools has been as a space for academic learning. This more traditional perception is challenged by a growing awareness that deliberate programming is necessary in order to create a safe and caring learning environment for children and youth. Violence occurs in both private (family and intimate relationships) and public spheres (school and community). As a community of youth and as a key site for social learning, schools can play a significant role in teaching non-violence and providing youth with the skills necessary to successfully negotiate their current and future interpersonal relationships.

Prevention programs target three main areas; knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. Programs that address a variety of risk and protective factors are more likely to be successful than those that address only a few. Prevention programs see violence as a learned behaviour, and that as such, violence can be unlearned and non-violent alternatives can be chosen. It is a process of changing direction away from violence and schools are an excellent site for this educational process.

Early intervention is essential to unlearning violence and learning to make non-violent choices. Social, behavioural and academic successes at school often forecast adjustment and productivity in adult life. An additional benefit of these programs within schools is the time that teachers must dedicate to resolving conflicts and managing disruptive behaviours in their classrooms and on school grounds. Violence prevention programs act as an excellent resource and support for teachers and support their students in learning ways in which to comfortably discuss and resolve issues.

*Tutty, L.M. (2002). School-Based Violence Prevention Programs: A Resource Manual.*

## Healthy Relationships for Youth

Healthy Relationships for Youth (HRY) believes that communication which reflects sexism, racism and homophobia creates harmful stereotyping and discrimination and that these oppressions are forms of violence. Through enhancing awareness of the social context of their lives and by promoting skill development to promote healthy interpersonal communication, youth can make positive decisions about their own behaviour.

The goal of the work of HRY is to reduce the risk of violence for youth through developing skills and knowledge related to developing and maintaining healthy relationships.

## Objectives of HRY

- Engage grade 9 students within the Strait Regional School Board in a series of classroom sessions designed to promote healthy and respectful relationships.
- To assist youth in developing the attitudes, values and skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- To increase students' understanding of racial/ cultural diversity specifically relating to the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian community.
- To increase students' awareness of issues related to violence prevention and social inequities from a gender based perspective.
- To foster youth development which includes; peer support, youth empowerment, youth-adult partnerships, meaningful contribution and experiential learning.

## Research Approach and Methodology

In the first year of implementation, the HRY program was active in five schools in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties;

- Dr. John Hugh Gillis Regional High School (Antigonish),
- Canso Academy,
- Guysborough Academy,
- East Antigonish Academy and
- St. Mary's Academy (Sherbrooke).

Results from the Student Surveys were returned from 3 of these five schools and Youth Facilitator Focus Groups were conducted at four of the five schools. East Antigonish and J. H. Gillis were unable to fully implement the HRY Program due to scheduling conflicts which will be resolved in the next school year.

Student Surveys were administered to all participating Grade 9PDR students by their teacher and the results returned in a sealed envelope to the HRY office. A total of 60 surveys were completed. The survey included 22 questions using Likert scales and one open question.

The Youth Facilitator Focus Groups were conducted by the Program Co-ordinator at each school with a total of 14 participants. Participants identified the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges associated with their roles as a classroom facilitators and as a member of the HRY team in their school. They were asked to consider the Strengths & Weaknesses as relating to internal factors that are within your ability to change or to acknowledge that are working well.

With the Opportunities and Challenges, they were asked to consider external factors which would be the environment of your school, the HRY Program - all things that you do not directly control but can make recommendations about for positive change or acknowledge that are working well.

# Research Results

## I. Student Survey (60 respondents)

CHART 1: How helpful was it to learn about the following topics?

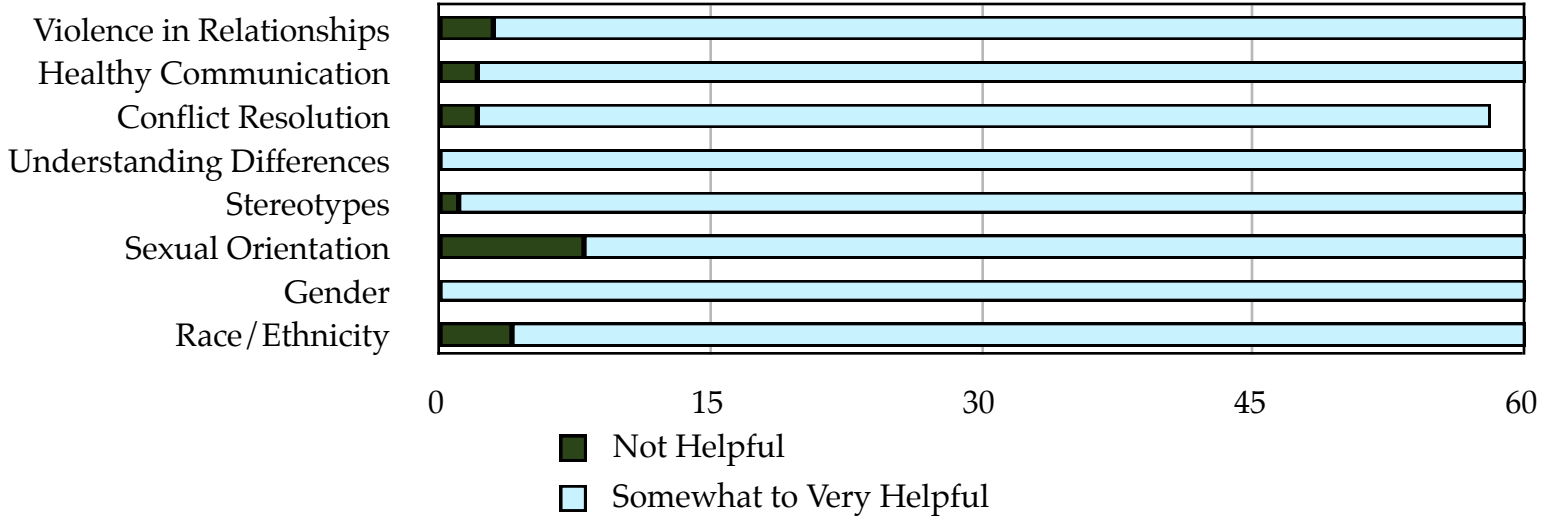


CHART 2: How would you rate each of the following methods?

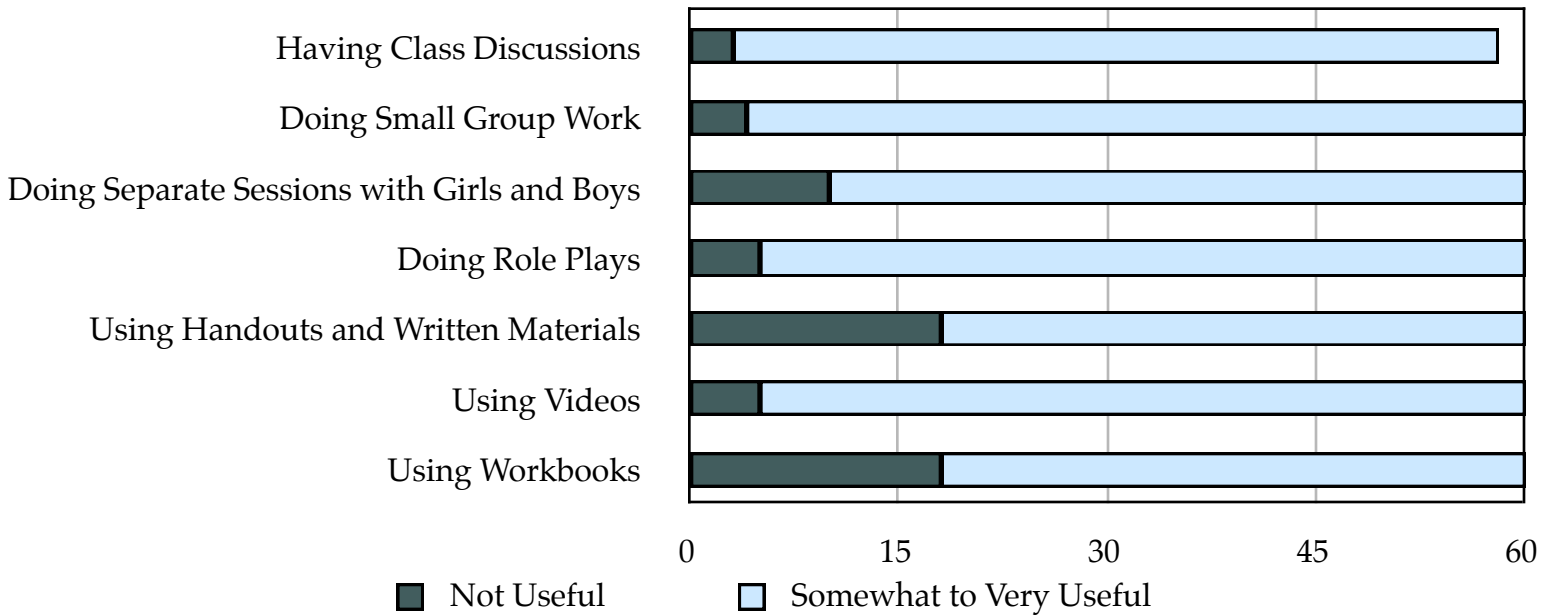


CHART 3: Please describe the differences you have noticed in the following:

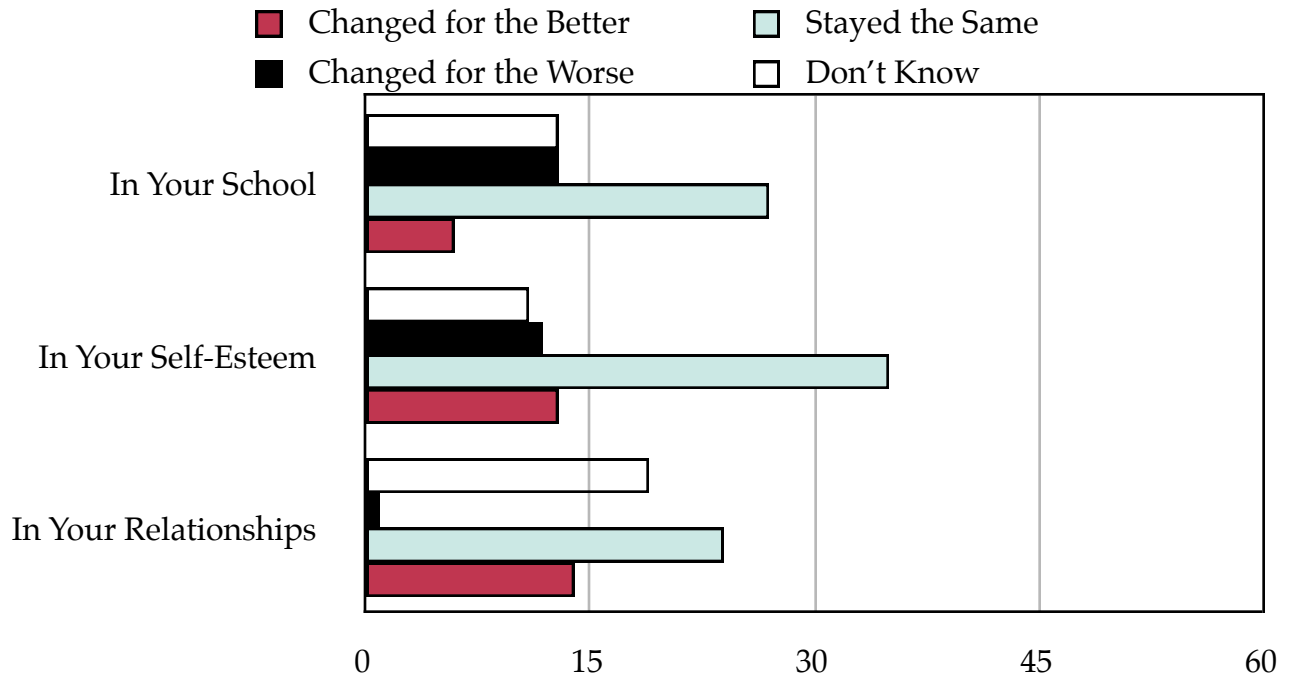


CHART 4: How would you rate each of the following?

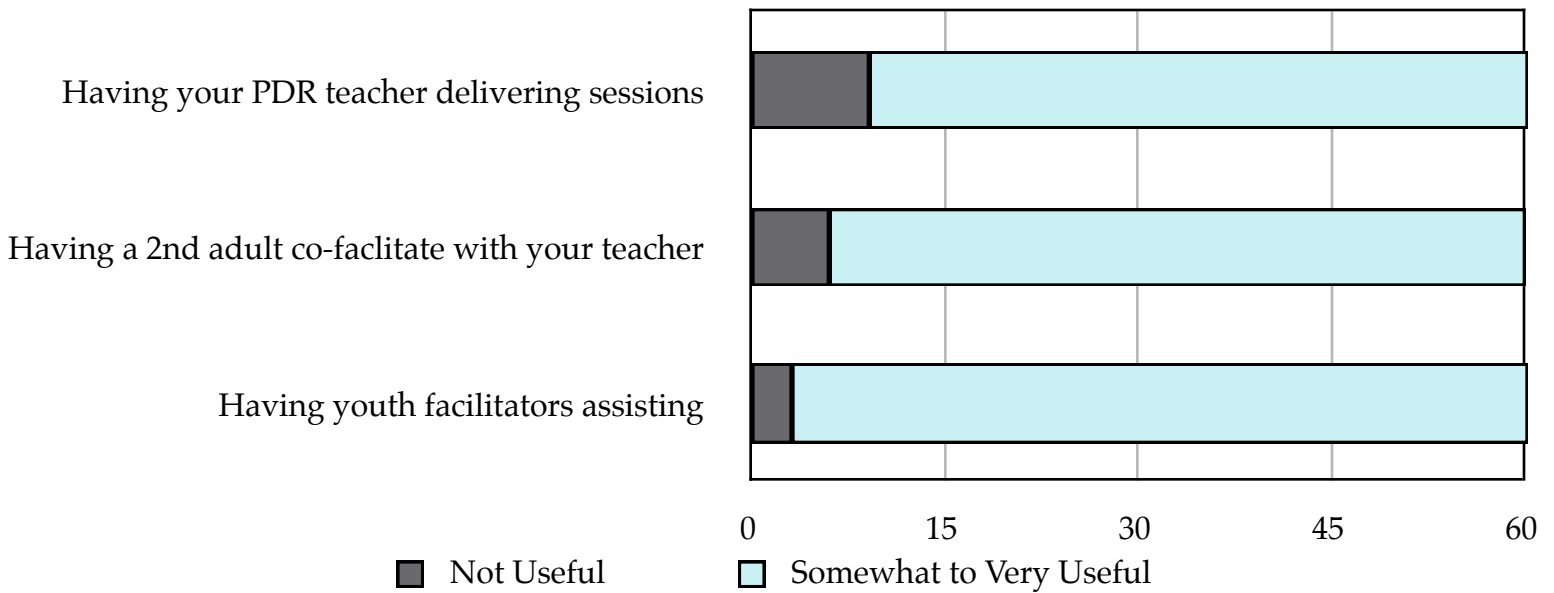
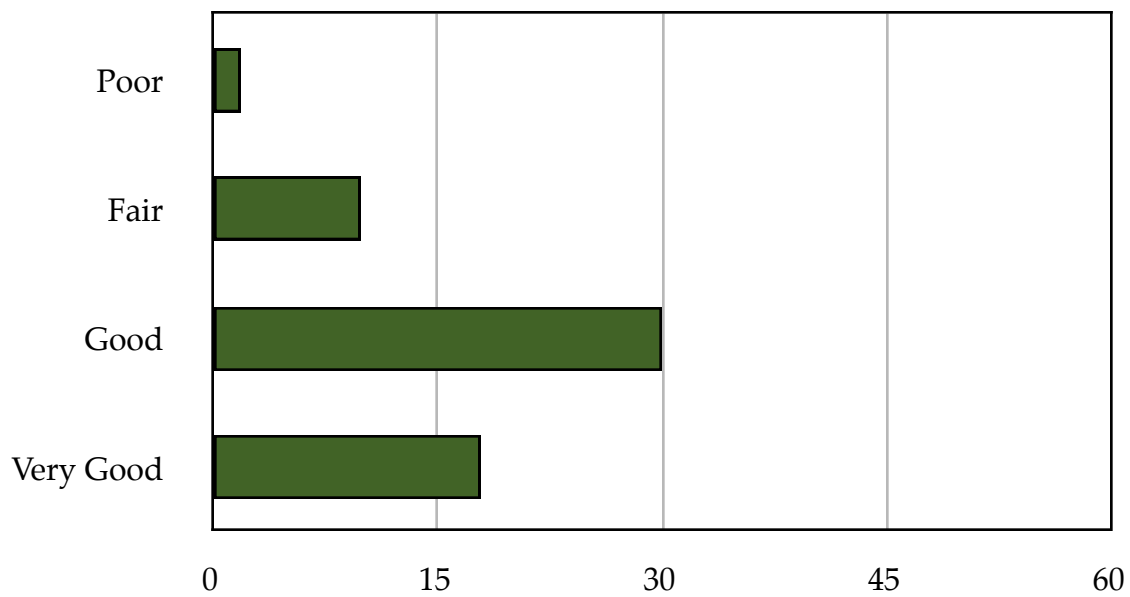


CHART 5: What is your overall impression of the Healthy Relationships Sessions?



## Question 7: What is one thing you learned or took away from these sessions that stands out for you? (40 respondents)

Responses related to program delivery and content	Responses indicating a change in behaviour or attitude.	Responses indicating new learning.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Doing the separate gender sessions because I found it easier to talk to girls like myself.</li> <li>2. Check in and videos.</li> <li>3. The space sessions were useful.</li> <li>4. I think we learn better when students are teaching us.</li> <li>5. I really enjoyed all the discussions because I got to get my voice heard.</li> <li>6. Having youth facilitators improves the way you look at different things, they come from the same place.</li> <li>7. One thing that stood out to me was the separate sessions.</li> <li>8. I do not think that the community standards should be read everyday.</li> <li>9. The community standards should not have been gone over every day, they should have just been posted.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That being different is okay.</li> <li>2. Be kind to others.</li> <li>3. Not to bully because it is bad.</li> <li>4. Don't judge people and respect decisions.</li> <li>5. You shouldn't beat up your girlfriend.</li> <li>6. I know more about healthy and unhealthy relationships. From what I learned, I know what to do and how to treat the women in my life, and I'm glad I learned this.</li> <li>7. How much people stereotype other people that are different from a group or someone else.</li> <li>8. I learned that no matter what you like, bi/homosexual, you are still the same.</li> <li>9. That people should value others' for their differences.</li> <li>10. Be yourself.</li> <li>11. How to be in healthy relationships and how to get out of a bad one.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.</li> <li>2. It was a lot of fun and I learned a lot.</li> <li>3. I learned more about relationships and the genders.</li> <li>4. One thing that stood out to me was about the abusive relationships.</li> <li>5. I learned a lot about stereotypes.</li> <li>6. I learned about solving conflicts.</li> <li>7. Healthy communication.</li> <li>8. Healthy relationships.</li> <li>9. Problem solving.</li> <li>10. How to solve problems.</li> <li>11. Healthy relationships.</li> <li>12. Getting to know about PAP tests, healthy relationships, practically the whole thing</li> <li>13. People should have healthy relationships.</li> <li>14. Violence is bad.</li> <li>15. I learned about healthy and unhealthy relationships.</li> <li>16. I've learned that students can be teachers when they're 16 or 17.</li> <li>17. That it is easier to learn from your peers than from adults. People listen to their friends better than adults anyways.</li> <li>18. I learned how to handle relationships.</li> <li>19. A lot about race and gays.</li> <li>20. That abusive relationships are everywhere.</li> </ol>

## II. Youth Facilitator Focus Groups (14 respondents)

### Reflect on your role as Youth Facilitator “In The Classroom”:

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>What is working for you, what are you doing well?</p>	<p>1. Talking about relationships. The students really seemed really interested in that topic.</p>	<p>1. Having the students listen while you're talking and directing the conversation based on what we learned.</p> <p>2. I think speaking with a team is working well. With a topic such as healthy relationships more perspectives and opinions that are shared make the sessions better, so having three people was certainly a strength.</p> <p>3. We get to know the students.</p> <p>4. <i>(The teacher)</i> involves everyone.</p> <p>5. <i>(The teacher)</i> is willing to take on the more troublesome groups.</p> <p>6. The formation of the chairs was really good to keep the students' attention.</p> <p>7. The short and simple lesson plans proved effective.</p> <p>8. Getting the point of the lessons across was going very well.</p> <p>9. Going in two at a time.</p> <p>10. Taking turns/helping each other.</p> <p>11. The ideas that some gave.</p> <p>12. Helping the students out.</p> <p>13. The fact that we already knew what to do for the most part.</p> <p>14. The activities worked well because everyone was more interested in doing something rather than sitting all the time.</p> <p>15. The semi-circle worked well.</p> <p>16. Group discussions go well, lots of input from the class most of the time.</p> <p>17. Class as a whole speaks a lot (and most of it is topic-related).</p> <p>18. Much easier to facilitate a discussion and to present in a circle.</p> <p>19. The story-telling was a great success this year and the separate genders also went well.</p>	<p>1. I feel like I'm a good person to talk with them about what needs to be done.</p> <p>2. I do well in my leadership and clear voice in the classroom.</p> <p>3. I have been leading the groups through the activities well.</p> <p>4. I am very used to being in front of groups of people due to my involvement in drama.</p> <p>5. I have a very strong voice.</p> <p>6. I am usually able to adapt things to suit what's going on.</p> <p>7. I participate in activities with the students.</p> <p>8. I explain different concepts to the class.</p> <p>9. I felt I spoke clearly but got no response.</p> <p>10. We got better as we got more experience.</p> <p>11. We are doing well in getting students to place their thoughts and debate over subjects.</p>

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <p><b>What is not working for you, what do you feel you could improve on?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. My younger brother had a lot of his friends were in my class and they think they don't have to listen.</li> <li>2. Lack of cooperation from the class.</li> <li>3. Sometimes the class doesn't listen.</li> <li>4. Some students don't take part.</li> <li>5. Keeping the kids attention and trying to ensure that they are listening the whole time.</li> <li>6. The class isn't very easy to get along with in a sense that they don't listen very well.</li> <li>7. Students' side-conversations can get in the way of the lesson.</li> <li>8. Students already know most of the games, lessons, etc. from previous years in the program.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We had to rush through classes.</li> <li>2. Bad timing.</li> <li>3. I found that some comments about a subject couldn't be justified without a fact to back it up, which was a major weakness when trying to teach.</li> <li>4. Improving each session isn't working right now, it will take time. The method of delivering the knowledge is interesting. Each time it changes. Once it was to pick a topic and discuss, rather than trying an activity. So it seems like with topics we don't know what to expect.</li> <li>5. The teacher not giving us enough freedom.</li> <li>6. The time period never worked well with us, we never had the time to finish everything we were supposed to.</li> <li>7. I think there is too many adult facilitators, especially with only one youth facilitator with them. Perhaps two youth and two adults would work better.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I find it really difficult at times to get across the purpose of some of the activities.</li> <li>2. I feel that I could look at the activities ahead of time to help me in the classroom.</li> <li>3. I could get more involved in class discussions.</li> <li>4. I could try to involve the class in group discussions.</li> <li>5. I could try and keep the class focused.</li> <li>6. I don't like to discipline people which can make things difficult.</li> <li>7. Try harder to keep the class' attention.</li> <li>8. Could be more prepared to facilitate by myself.</li> <li>9. We should have prepared stuff before we taught our class.</li> <li>10. The three of us together should have went over what we were going to discuss in the class.</li> <li>11. I can improve on being more open with the class.</li> <li>12. I can explain things better.</li> <li>13. I could try to be more assertive when I am speaking or teaching a class (less shy).</li> <li>14. I can improve by making them listen more (speak louder, review the standards clearly)</li> <li>15. I can improve on my patience.</li> </ol>



	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p><b>Opportunities:</b> Are there things in the program and how it fits in our school that could be changed to work better for you as a YF?</p>	<p>1. Some students didn't feel comfortable talking about some things in the book.</p>	<p>1. Not to have (<i>the teachers</i>) present. The students would feel more comfortable with what is being talked about; they mentioned that they can't say half of the things that they want to because of their presence.</p> <p>2. Nothing needs to be improved, it all went very smoothly.</p> <p>3. Meeting and debriefing times should be changed. During too many classes is difficult for a student.</p> <p>4. Classes can be scheduled for a specific time.</p> <p>5. Try to make the discussions more interesting so the students are more willing to participate.</p> <p>6. The teacher has to know the days and times that the classes take place.</p> <p>7. Has to be more structured, permanent.</p> <p>8. Teachers have to be willing to go through with everything in the criteria.</p> <p>9. Schedule times for classes.</p> <p>10. Have classes less scattered (not one class one week, then three the next, then none, etc.).</p> <p>11. More interactive activities (ex: instead of answering questions about a film on healthy relationships, why not have the students do a short skit to show an alternate ending - either healthy or unhealthy?).</p> <p>12. I think the strategy we used this year worked really well.</p> <p>13. I like that we get to teach grade 9 students in PDR because they have a basic understanding of themselves and are a little more mature than those starting high school. It gives the program a chance to change and challenge ideas that are rarely talked about.</p> <p>14. I think the topics should be varied depending on what school/class you visit. We know the background of the class so we should be choosing the topics that suit the students better, or the students should pick the topics discussed.</p> <p>15. I think we should discuss gays and bisexuals more because when we brought it up the class all seemed to be very negative about it.</p>	<p>1. I found that I missed a lot of the same classes, so perhaps better care could be put into the scheduling process.</p>

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p>Challenges:</p> <p>What is getting in the way of being the best YF you can be?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not having the same opinion or hearing someone say “that is rude but it is their opinion” sparks a challenge among program leaders.</li> <li>2. My classes are definitely the major aspect that is interfering with these sessions.</li> <li>3. Sometimes the kids lost focus, whether the lesson was boring or not, but they kind of started losing interest in some lessons.</li> <li>4. Getting the students to pay attention most of the time.</li> <li>5. Lack of cooperation from the class.</li> <li>6. People are not taking the lessons seriously.</li> <li>7. Our school is so small that everyone knows you so they don’t feel obligated to listen to you.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Getting the students to be comfortable talking to me, as we were constantly going back and forth between classes. Maybe the facilitators could be assigned a single class (or split up between two classes), and schedule the sessions to only work with that one.</li> <li>2. This year we had students who had gone through all of junior high with (<i>a program</i>), so they didn’t find the lessons to be new material for them (this should correct itself the next two years though).</li> <li>3. Rushing through lessons that need time to go over.</li> <li>4. The adult ‘facilitators’ this year don’t seem to be very concerned with the program.</li> <li>5. Our teacher didn’t really trust us or give us the chance to really teach the class. (<i>The teacher</i>) kept butting in and taking over when it was us doing the teaching so it felt as though we couldn’t teach how we wanted to.</li> <li>6. My school work is getting in the way. (<i>The teacher</i>) was taking our class time to talk about the sessions we were going to teach that same day, so there goes more class time. We need to plan before and not on class time, it really only takes a few minutes, not 20 minutes.</li> <li>7. The thing getting in the way for me is patience. Also, the kids listen much better when a lesson perks their interests. A few more interesting activities would bring great results.</li> <li>8. Classes are not scheduled and occur very rarely.</li> <li>9. Class takes place in the gym which makes it hard to focus.</li> <li>10. Students are too spread out in the seating.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Me being kind of shy gets in my way because I don’t talk or speak up as much as I should and I do not always express my opinion.</li> </ol>

## Reflect on your role as Youth Facilitator “As a Member of the HRY Team in Your School”:

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <p>What is working for your team, what are you doing well together?</p>	<p>1. The kids listen better to us than to the adults.</p>	<p>1. Doing the lessons together and our team work is really good and simplifies the work load.</p> <p>2. Talking about how our sessions went after the class was over very often.</p> <p>3. We shared our sessions and stuck to the schedule well sometimes.</p> <p>4. Having both male and female facilitators for the separate genders.</p> <p>5. We have a stronger and larger role in the classroom. We do more teaching as opposed to just helping.</p> <p>6. With three people we are able to divide the class well.</p>	<p>1. Talking about relationships seemed to work best for the team.</p> <p>2. The best thing that is working for the team is that we respect each others' opinions.</p> <p>3. Our team works well together because we have a basic understanding of what needs to be addressed from the sections. We all get along and will agree or disagree on topics so that makes it easier for students to contribute in our conversations and feel that it's okay to speak their minds.</p> <p>4. We communicated and related ourselves to some of the things the students were saying.</p> <p>5. We know each other so it isn't hard to talk.</p> <p>6. We make decisions that affect the whole team in a way that satisfies everyone.</p> <p>7. The YFs talked among themselves to see who would go into what classes, which classes it would be better to have two YFs instead of one.</p> <p>8. We were able to decide which people went to which classes, and how to divide the time well.</p> <p>9. We are all strong speakers.</p> <p>10. Having past facilitators seems to really help the adults, since we're familiar with it and have done it before.</p> <p>11. We all get along well. We're all great people who know each other, feel comfortable with each other and aren't shy around each other.</p> <p>12. We all work well together and we share and help each other in the classroom.</p> <p>13. Our team is very positive. We talk together and work well together. We also don't mind covering a turn if need be.</p> <p>14. We talk well together and we keep each others' spirits up.</p> <p>15. We are able to work well together and are good with people.</p> <p>16. We are taking different parts and it makes us a good team.</p>

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p>Weaknesses:</p> <p>What is not working for your team, what do you feel you could improve on?</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We didn't really have enough sessions to talk about the really important topics so hopefully next year that can be fixed.</li> <li>2. Sit down meetings. After school we are all pretty busy so after schools meetings aren't working well.</li> <li>3. We had very few meetings, sometimes we were confused on what session we were on.</li> <li>4. The teachers at times seemed at a bit of a loss when it came to facilitating the discussion, and would just read aloud points from the text.</li> <li>5. I think we could start having regular meetings to talk about upcoming sessions, and plan them out better.</li> <li>6. There was little organization because we had no meetings.</li> <li>7. The lessons didn't seem as open - questions were treated as only having one right answer.</li> <li>8. We don't have meetings with the adult facilitator which makes it hard to know where each class stands and what we think we should try in different teaching/ facilitating methods to see if there is a change in class behaviour.</li> <li>9. The teacher seems to have higher priorities over the program.</li> <li>10. One member of our Adult Facilitators has not shown up. Due to this we started sessions late.</li> <li>11. No schedules - we don't know when classes are, or which class is there.</li> <li>12. More organization is needed, as well as having a female adult facilitator.</li> <li>13. Having a topic to discuss with so many areas in an hour sometimes leaves only one youth facilitator speaking for the majority of the hour while others have not much time to address the topic.</li> <li>14. I think we should be able to meet for a longer period of time before each session. It will improve our knowledge of the topics.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The odd times to get our sessions ready (during class) - we would have done it on our own time.</li> <li>2. We could do nothing - stick with the same people, they're awesome!</li> <li>3. I don't think anything is going bad or not working well.</li> <li>4. I think our team has a little trouble with actually starting each activity, there's a little bit of downtime.</li> <li>5. I think with practice we will get better and then we will roll through the lesson plan.</li> </ol>

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p>Opportunities: Are there things that could be changed to allow the HRY program to be delivered more effectively?</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule the classes.</li> <li>2. Take the classes out of the gym and into an actual classroom so that the students' attention is focused on us and the lessons, not the surroundings.</li> <li>3. The teachers need to be educated on the program a little better.</li> <li>4. It would be good if the program was started earlier to make time for unavoidable delays.</li> <li>5. The old adult facilitators worked well.</li> <li>6. We don't use flip charts. I think they help and they deliver the message to the rest of the class.</li> <li>7. I would like more opportunities for one group to present to the other.</li> <li>8. More time, short movie clips, and teaching more classes would be a good way to make the program more effective. Testimonials are also useful.</li> <li>9. I think the topics should be more varied. Each class will have a different specific topic to discuss.</li> <li>10. Having a written schedule might help us to run smoother. Just a little one on the door could be very helpful.</li> <li>11. Use more visuals - that would keep the students more focused too, just put in things like overheads to show graphs, pictures, etc. (more media usage).</li> <li>12. More videos would be beneficial, it explains things more clearly.</li> <li>13. Some more games or something to get the kids more involved. They didn't really seem to know what to do a lot of the time or didn't understand sometimes.</li> <li>14. Should set along days so they can fill in their folders.</li> <li>15. Have meetings regularly.</li> <li>16. Have two youth facilitators per session (one boy and one girl maybe?)</li> <li>17. A meeting either weekly or every two weeks to keep us updated on what is going on.</li> <li>18. I feel that some of the topics warrant having more time spent on them instead of a single session, and that the students could benefit from a more in-depth education.</li> <li>19. I don't think there are any changes that need to be made.</li> </ol>	

	Responses related to Student Engagement.	Responses related to Program Organization.	Responses related to Youth Facilitators.
<p>Challenges:</p> <p>What is getting in the way of your team being the best it can be?</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If we had more time we would be able to do our best but we don't really so it could improve our team.</li> <li>2. More team members.</li> <li>3. The main thing getting in our way is not having enough time to have more sessions.</li> <li>4. The adults are kind of new to the facilitating style of teaching and not used to being in the classroom setting we use (circle, no desks, etc.)</li> <li>5. More meetings, less facilitators.</li> <li>6. We don't seem to be very organized as a team. I at times felt that there were too many adult facilitators, when we could have benefited from having another youth. It was also very difficult without the videos.</li> <li>7. The students weren't used to a course like this and decided it wasn't important. It should be working in to run just like any other class.</li> <li>8. The teacher is really the only big problem we faced. (<i>The teacher</i>) takes over teaching a lot of the time and always seems to butt in. We are the ones teaching and trying to do our best but it seems like <i>the teacher</i> won't let us.</li> <li>9. We often appear to have 'boring' topics, so say the grade 9s, so if it was more exciting to them then we could connect better.</li> <li>10. Trying to work more together and trying to get the class to listen more and take part more. It's hard when they don't feel comfortable with the older staff there.</li> <li>11. We don't have regular meetings, when we do talk it's a brief discussion maybe 5 minutes long and it's only concerning when class is to occur.</li> <li>12. Since the class is in the gym the students are distracted which makes teaching more difficult.</li> <li>13. The grade 9s know us too well - perhaps with a younger class it would work better.</li> <li>14. Time restraints.</li> <li>15. Our outside facilitator has not shown up, and the teacher seems to want to get through the program ASAP. (<i>The teacher</i>) doesn't seem to be interested in it.</li> <li>16. Not having the female adult facilitator present with the class.</li> <li>17. Lack of time and scheduling.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I think the fact that we are quite reserved people affect how we deliver information. If we weren't we could be more effective.</li> </ol>

## Healthy Relationships for Youth

An overall analysis of the data from students find the subject matter being presented to be helpful to a significant majority of students as seen in Chart 1. “Gender” and “Understanding Differences” were supported by all students in the grade 9 PDR courses surveyed. Material presented on “Race”, “Stereotypes”, “Conflict Resolution”, “Healthy Communication Styles” and “Violence in relationships” were each viewed as somewhat to very helpful for 93% to 98% of the students surveyed while only 1 to 4 students found each category presented by the Healthy Relationships for Youth program to be unhelpful. “Sexual Orientation/LGBT Issues” was somewhat to very helpful for 85% of students surveyed and additionally had the lowest response rate of the questions. Alternately it was indicated within a focus group that, *“I think that we should discuss gays and bisexuals more because when we brought it up the class all seemed to be very negative about it”*. This lower percentage may be linked to the presence of homophobia and anti-LGBT sentiment present in the school system resulting in the difference between this particular topic and others covered.

Students indicated that they had learned from the HRY classroom sessions, *“How to be in healthy relationships and how to get out of a bad one”* another student commented that *“I know more about healthy and unhealthy relationships. From what I learned, I know what to do and how to treat the women in my life, and I’m glad I learned this.”* Students indicated that they *“learned about solving conflicts”, to “be kind to others” and “how much people stereotype other people that are different from a group or someone else”*. Beyond the subjects addressed in the survey, students indicated other areas of learning, as in the following comment that a student *“used to be very conscious about body image, but realized I am fine the way I am.”*

The delivery method being used by the program (Chart 2) was successful for students, with the greatest support being indicated for having youth co-facilitators. As was indicated, *“I’ve learned that students can be teachers when they’re 16 or 17”* and *“that it is easier to learn from your peers than from adults. People listen to their friends better than adults anyway”*. Students were least interested in written materials with regards to workbooks and handouts and preferred interactive methods of facilitation such as *“Having Class Discussions”, “Doing Small Group Work”, “Doing Separate Sessions with Girls and Boys”, “Doing Role Plays” and “Using Videos”*. In a focus group it was indicated that, *“group discussions go well, lots of input from the class most of the time”* and *“The activities worked well because everyone was more interested in doing something rather than sitting all the time”*. It was suggested that the program could try to, *“use more visuals - that would keep the students more focused too, just put in things like overheads to show graphs, pictures, etc”* and that, *“more videos would be beneficial, it explains things more clearly”*.

There were not significant immediate changes evident according to the students’ responses (Chart 3) with the majority of responses indicating that with regards to relationships, self-esteem and the school environment the situation has remained the same. With an education program such as Healthy Relationships for Youth, it is difficult to immediately measure impacts, as many impacts are long-term and would need to be examined in a longitudinal study including an attitudes survey.

Students showed the most support for having youth facilitators present in the classroom. Some areas for improvement were indicated by the Youth Facilitators around cooperation with adult facilitators and a need for increased familiarity with subject matter and facilitation style. One youth facilitator suggested that, *“the adults are kind of new to the facilitating style of teaching and not used to being in the classroom setting we use (circle, no desks, etc.)”*. The presence of this alternate style of information delivery could be beneficial as an opportunity for teachers to work with students and to develop new strategies for use in their classrooms.

The overall impression of students of the Healthy Relationships for Youth program indicates that 50% of youth found the program to be good and 30% found it to be Very Good. 16.7% of students surveyed indicated that the program was Fair, with 3.3% identifying it as Poor. This result is encouraging as 80% of youth value the program being offered within their PDR classes and points to a need to continue development of the delivery and curriculum of this program to better address the needs of the remaining 20%.

## Conclusion

The results of this survey are encouraging with regards to the overall experiences and perceptions of the program. It is also extremely beneficial to have the areas of criticism and suggestion to work with as we continue to develop the program and learn from participating students. The indication is that this program is a unique opportunity for students within these schools in terms of the opportunities provided both for the grade 9 PDR classes and for the youth who have the experience of facilitating and participating in their learning processes. The results indicate that the majority of students are benefiting from the information being provided and the methods through which it is being delivered. We look forward to continuing to grow and adapt to incoming classes and to continue to explore ways in which to better support students and teachers within the Strait Regional School Board.